Longer Poems
of the
Nineteenth Century

Second Series. 1850–1900

SELECTED
AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY

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NOTE

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The White Ship. Messrs. Ellis.
The Hound of Heaven. Mr. Wilfrid Meynell.

INTRODUCTION

In 1850 Wordsworth died and Tennyson became Poet Laureate in the stead of one whom he himself described as having "uttered nothing base". This event and the moral tag attached to it usher in the period and spirit of Victorianism at once. It is the age both of Tennyson and of a high moral tone. Even the shockers of this moral tone—with Swinburne at their head—subscribe to the doctrine of its predominance by the violence of their resistance.

But, underneath this eminently respectable exterior there is going forward an immense work of destruction and reconstruction. For the poets it is a time of intense fears, of spiritual agonizings, and of heresies; it is a time also of more or less complete denial of the contemporary world and of flight into the mediæval and ancient ages for relief.

The trouble came in two waves, an earlier agitation created by rationalistic theology in Germany and a later caused by new theories in biology in England itself. The former movement, taking rise in the eighteenth century, first affected England powerfully in 1846 when George Eliot published anonymously her translation of

David Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, a characteristically cold and clear analysis of the inconsistent and irrational elements in the received evangelical life of Christ. The latter disturbance took its rise mainly from the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. More than a decade lies, therefore, between the two impulses, represented by these books, towards the revision of long-accepted dogmas in the spiritual and natural worlds.

The nineteenth century is, then, the period of gradual acceptance and application of historical principles and an historical view-point in theological, scientific, and artistic studies. The leaven of Bacon, calmly disregarded by the Elizabethans with their anachronisms, had by now permeated the whole Western European mind, and a thinking man must, in the latter half of the century, accept the scientific historical standpoint or be labelled a reactionary.

The English mind of 1830 into which these new ideas irrupted was, however, strongly charged with religious fervour. On the one hand, the eighteenth-century work of the Wesleys and Whitefield, though conducted mainly among the lower classes, had borne fruit in a strong evangelical sentiment in religious worship and preaching, and, on the other, the Romantic return to the Middle Ages had encouraged a taste for ritual splendour and a new understanding of the subtlety and power of the mediæval religious mind which came out strongly in the Oxford Movement of the early '30's. Thus were both Low Church and High Church renewed and fortified, while the Dissenting bodies grew steadily in adherents and interested themselves increasingly in education from the primary to the university stage.

All the stronger must the conflict rage round the question as to what the truth was that must be promulgated through the pulpit and taught through the schools, whether a literal interpretation of the word of the Authorized Version of the English Bible with all that depended therefrom as regarded the age of the earth (according to Archbishop Usher) and the Fall of Man from an estate " a little lower than the angels ", or a trust in the new sciences of the Higher Criticism in theology and of geology and the Ascent of Man from a position but little removed from the anthropoid ape; whether of Orthodox Faith or of Scientific Scepticism.

For some few minds there were other courses open than either the rejection or the acceptance of old theology or new science. There was the possibility of reversion to old pagan faiths, pre-Christian and pre-scientific, but brushed up to suit a modern mind and outlook; there was also the possibility of throwing aside the whole dispute as an insoluble problem, of brushing away the noisy disputants as though they were flies infesting the otherwise serene beauty of pure art. However it be, the poets of 1850 to 1900 all array themselves on one side or another of these central debates of their age, all have their say or state their denial, all have to be approached as combatants in the stricken field of Modernism *v.* Mediævalism which has decided the intellectual map of present-day Europe.

One other aspect of English life with its reflex on the English mind there is which needs mention in order to gain a completer picture of the intellectual struggle which produced literature in the second half of the century. This is the phenomenal growth of trade and commercial wealth in England since the onset of the

Industrial Revolution which arose from the application of steam in industry and the invention of a number of machines for the woollen and cotton industries in the second half of the eighteenth century. This application and these inventions gave England nearly half a century's start over other European countries in the industrial race of competition and also forced a huge growth of the cities at the expense of the countryside, driving the workers at the old cottage-industries with their hand-worked machines into the new power-driven mills. Hence arose the beginnings of Trade Unionism, a time of terrible struggle for the working classes and the debating up and down and the practice of Free Trade and unrestricted competition, the testing in the fire of actual experience of the economic principles of Adam Smith, Bentham, Malthus, and Ricardo. The intellectual reflection of these struggles is, however, to be found much more in the prose of the period, in Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Social Novel of Charles Kingsley and George Eliot, than in poetry, though the latter is by no means untouched by the strife. The following selections contain, however, no example of a poem dealing with social conditions of the time, and this aspect of English life may, therefore, be left with bare mention and no more.

TENNYSON

The three volumes of poetry which Tennyson had published before his accession to the Laureateship had proved him not only a master of technique equal to any predecessor in his office but a man deeply in-

terested and competent in the main intellectual studies and problems of his day. The classical literatures, history, and natural science were already favourite pursuits of the young poet when he entered Cambridge University in 1828. The University was then given over entirely to mathematics, so far as academic distinction was concerned, but Tennyson spent his four years there in further classical studies, in which no English poet since Milton has been his equal, and in the intensely stimulating intellectual company of a group of fellow-students who, from their number, were known as the "Apostles" and who nearly all achieved high distinction in later life in various fields of public life and of scholarship. His closest intimate by far was Arthur Hallam, a man for whose ability and character no encomium seemed too high. In the summer of 1830 the two men travelled to the Pyrenees to aid some Spanish rebels, a sign that their activities were not merely confined to understanding problems intellectually. Hallam would have been more closely allied to Tennyson by marriage with the poet's sister Emily, but his life was suddenly cut short by illness in 1833 while he was in Vienna. Tennyson's first expression of his grief is to be found in *Ulysses*, perhaps the greatest of his early poems; the maturer expression, fruit of seventeen years' painful debate with himself, is *In Memoriam*, published in 1850.

The whole poem is a string of 130 lyrics connected together both by a sense of passage of time and by the themes treated. The themes are Love, Death, and Immortality—subjects arising immediately from the conflict occasioned in Tennyson by the loss of Hallam. The poet, faced with the bodily loss of his friend, my-

believe that either the friend is lost for ever or that he exists in some immortal shape and that reunion will follow. Every aspect of the question of personal immortality is, therefore, gone over in impassioned search for a basis of faith, since proof there can be none. But, deeper still than even this great question is the necessity that, whether immortality be or not, love must remain. The proof of the poet's soul and of his manhood is that his feeling for his friend should survive death itself and triumph over time.

The sections selected come from the earlier part of the poem where the sense of loss is still very keen and before the philosophic and scientific aspects of life and death are entered upon. They form a complete part in themselves, showing how the thought is held continuously over a series of lyrics. In this way the chronological sense of passage of time over three consecutive Christmases is kept, along with the psychological sense of growing maturity of thought and feeling.

Tithonus was published in 1864 in the volume " Enoch Arden and Other Poems " but was actually written over twenty years earlier. It is a lyrical monologue of the type of many, like *Œnone* and *Ulysses*, published in their final form in the 1842 volume and based, like these examples, on classical story. The fable is that the dawn-goddess Eos fell in love with Tithonus, Prince of Troy and brother of Priam who later became the King of Troy of the Trojan war of Homer's epic. Eos took Tithonus for her husband and, to keep him for ever, she begged of the gods the gift of immortality for him but forgot to ask also for the gift of everlasting youth. Tithonus, therefore, lived on but to old age and decrepitude. In the poem Tennyson enters into the aged

Tithonus's utter weariness of life and creates beauty out of his unavailing regrets.

The two selections from Tennyson are intended to show, in narrow space, both his lyrical exquisiteness, his depth of feeling and his philosophic breadth and power.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Born in 1822, Arnold was thirteen years younger than Tennyson and ten years younger than Browning and began publishing poetry much later, in consequence, than either. It chances, however, that *The Scholar Gipsy*, belonging to his second volume of "Poems" (1853), appeared before the poem taken from Browning, and he is, therefore, taken next in order.

Like Tennyson, Arnold was a considerable classical scholar but connected with the other university of Oxford, the environs of which are so beautifully touched upon in the poem. Comparison between the two poets is fruitful also with regard to their reactions to the controversies of faith and doubt of their time, for, while Tennyson found it hard enough to wring any sort of faith out of philosophical doubt, Arnold's faith went almost completely under. Arnold lost practically all faith in the historicity of the story of Christ and came to believe that only the poetry of Christianity would survive while the facts, one by one, gave way beneath the attacks of criticism. In this new state of historical doubt but poetic faith, it is necessary for him to keep tight hold of some rule of conduct, some mo[illegible]y which has a far deeper basis than convenience [illegible] vention, which is grounded in the nature of [illegible] itself.

Hence, in the story of the Scholar Gipsy, which inspires the poem, he is moved by the certainty of purpose by which the scholar of the tale lived and which he pursued unfalteringly through life, in sharp contrast to the vacillation which Arnold feels within his own mind when faced with the need to act in this way or that in life. Part of Arnold's trouble is due to his innate coldness of temper. He is affectionate and faithful, true to great causes which his robust father, Dr. Arnold of Rugby, made his life-work and instilled a belief in into his son, but he has not the passion which flings aside caution and doubt and accomplishes results however imperfect. Allied with this temperamental weakness is, however, an artistic strength, for the verse of Arnold demonstrates a perfection of phrasing as fine as anything Tennyson can show. Arnold became later, when his poetic afflatus failed, the great critic of the half century, and his verse will stand the most stringent application of his own principles of poetic truth and poetic beauty laid down in his essay on "The Study of Poetry". Finally, he excels in the construction of similes and, again like Tennyson, he has the finest and most discerning eye for the details of natural beauty, as his pictures of single flowers will demonstrate.

The poem is, technically, a pastoral belonging to the great classical tradition which began with the Greek Theocritus of the third century B.C. and was carried across Latin literature to Spenser and so down through Milton, Pope, and Shelley to the Victorian age.

BROWNING

In Browning we have the great counterpart of Tennyson; these two principally upheld the Romantic tradition of poetry throughout the nineteenth century and, at the same time, offered between them an immense variety of subject-matter and treatment because of the wide differences between them of scholastic upbringing and of natural genius. Browning scarcely knew school or university but fed his imagination and intellect on his father's curious library, and on studies which ramified from that beginning. He was robuster in body than Tennyson and far robuster in intellect and in a disposition to faith. He had the will to believe and the intellectual strength and subtlety to find grounds of solid faith under the shifting sands of dispute.

It is not, however, with his relations to the intellectual troubles of his day that we are here concerned; they can be studied best by those who, besides the love that everyone has for Rabbi ben Ezra and Abt Vogler, are possessed by the Browningite passion for ploughing through his long poems after 1869 and *The Ring and the Book*.

Here our concern is with his passion for mankind rather than for speculation in philosophic affairs. It is this piercing vision into the characters of all sorts and conditions of human beings which saves Browning for most readers, this and his supreme ability to set the persons whom he studies in circumstances and a state of mind in which their salient qualities come out naturally and powerfully. "Our interest," he says, "is in the dangerous edge of things," and it is his delight to depict some man or woman at the parting of the ways

in life, in the midst of some crisis, his or her decision in which will decide also the permanent set of his or her character and, therefore, destiny. His poems of the middle period, 1846 to 1861, which coincides with his ideal married union with Mrs. Browning, are all tragedies or comedies of a soul, in which the circumstances and motives governing or leading to a decision are elaborated in dramatic monologue by the soul itself. That is, whereas the lyrical monologue of sensibility is Tennyson's own, the dramatic monologue of debate and decision is the particular mark of Browning's genius at its best.

It is generally agreed that the volume *Men and Women*, published in 1855, contains, among its fifty poems, the largest body, proportionate to its size, of Browning's best poetic work. Every poem, short or long, is a jewel and most have found their way into anthologies. To select one rather than another is an invidious task, for, of the longer poems, a dozen have qualities of the poet which clamour for recognition as necessary elements of his genius. *Fra Lippo Lippi* is here chosen as enclosing perhaps the largest number of these qualities within the limits of a single poem.

The character of the old Italian painter is based upon the life of him given by Vasari in the famous *Lives of the Painters*, which was everyone's guide to Italian art before the later nineteenth century produced its monumental histories of the subject. How closely the poet has followed his source can be seen from the notes, but these notes cannot show, as a reading of the whole life given by Vasari will, how brilliantly the account of the very human painter's doings has been worked up into a living portrait nor

how the poetic imagination of Browning has universalized this individual painter till he has become the type of the Bohemian artist of genius.

According to Browning's usual method, the human being—in this case Fra Lippo Lippi—is caught at a characteristic moment of his life and, by the most convincing arrangement of circumstances, he is made to discourse upon himself and explain, in the most natural way, how he came to be there, his way of life, and his character, which brought him to this pass. Further than that, the painter has a philosophy of his art, and in the statement of this we have Browning's great distinction of being the poet of the English nineteenth century who best understood the souls and aims of artists who were not poets, could explain them far better than they knew themselves, and could place them unerringly where they stand in the tradition of their art. In this and like monologues of artists he is our *first historian of art in point of time, first also in depth* of apprehension to the present day.

Fra Lippo Lippi catches, besides, in plenitude the very uncommon and, therefore, precious quality of humour in a poet. Tennyson's humour, when present, was always " rather grim ", as a friend of his described it, and not easily shareable by the reader with comfort; Browning's humour at its best, as in this poem, is the natural thing, closely allied to that ability to " make the best of a bad job " which Englishmen like to think of as peculiarly theirs.

Then, finally, there are those lines in the pure vernacular, like " If you get simple beauty and nought else, You get about the best thing God invents ", which are the acme of natural feeling and poetry at once.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

The year 1850, besides fixing a beginning for the maturer work of Tennyson and Browning and almost coinciding with the beginning of Arnold's brief poetic period, is significant for the introduction to the world of a group of poets and artists of somewhat different aims. In 1848 seven men—including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman Hunt, J. E. Millais, and Thomas Woolner the sculptor—came together to propose the common aim of reviving art by a strict adherence to nature, and became known as the Pre-Raphaelitè Brotherhood because their practice of art resembled that of the mediæval artists of Italy in that fidelity to nature which the Renascence schools after Raphael set aside. Their magazine, *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art*, illustrated, in its brief course of four numbers, the principles followed by the school and called the attention of an unwilling public to a new movement in their midst. Ruskin also championed them and, thereafter, every member of the school won recognition in time and immensely influenced the course of the arts of poetry and painting.

Christina Rossetti, youngest of a brilliant family of four children of an Italian exile established in England, contributed to three numbers of *The Germ* but, like the chief Pre-Raphaelite poet, her brother Dante Gabriel, produced little during the next ten years. Then appeared a series of small volumes from 1862, including, in 1866, *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems*, the title poem of which is here given as a specimen of her work.

Of Italian blood or upbringing there is scarcely a

trace in Christina Rossetti's poetry. She was fervently religious and strongly attached to the principles and ritual of the Anglican Church, and a great deal of her work lies in the field of religious poetry, forming a body of song and meditation not equalled in English literature since the early seventeenth century. All her poetry, whether religious or not, has a melancholy cast, partly due to temperament, partly to an early disappointment in love on account of religious differences. Yet sadness is not the most distinguishing quality of her work, rather a fine sense of form, an intense sensibility, an imaginative sympathy with all forms of life including those which, according to her creed, would be labelled sinful. Her writing is singularly pure and penetrating, above all things sincere and yet tender, and her place is by the side of Mrs. Browning as the poetess of the age who best expressed the reactions of the feminine soul to things of the day.

The Prince's Progress is evidently an allegory, though capable of various interpretations in detail. Less well known than her one other long poem *Goblin Market*, it is no less effectively told and follows a clearer thread of narrative. It fully illustrates all the qualities of the poetess's work that have been mentioned.

WILLIAM MORRIS

Again, the order taken of the poets chosen varies from the chronological order of their respective births, for D. G. Rossetti was born in 1828, while William Morris saw the light in 1834, Lord de Tabley in 1835, and Swinburne in 1837. The chronology of the poems selected from these men being made the governing

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consideration in arranging their order, it becomes easier to see the general movement of poetry apart from extraneous matters of birth-date and first publication.

Morris was never one of the Pre-Raphaelites, but he is allied to them in theory and practice. Apart from having come directly under Rossetti's influence in the choice of painting for a profession, his passion for the mediæval brought him into line with much of the work of the Pre-Raphaelite school, and he is commonly classed with them. A man of phenomenal energy, he practised all the fine arts as a master, devoted his considerable fortune to the running of a firm of designers of fine furniture, hangings, and interior decoration which revolutionized English taste by the end of the century, and filled all the intervals of labour in his workshops with the writing of poems and prose romances which form a small library in themselves.

Much of his poetry is translation or adaptation, mainly of Greek and of English and Scandinavian mediæval stories, and, the "pitch" of his poetic scale being comparatively low, the language straightforward—despite a number of Chaucerisms and borrowings from Malory—his verse is easy to read, sometimes too easy.

His main poetic work, *The Earthly Paradise*, published in three volumes between 1868 and 1870, imitates Chaucer by linking together twenty-four tales by a thread of narrative. He imagines a group of a dozen Viking sailors being cast away on an island in mid-Atlantic, where they find a settlement of ancient Greeks. The agreement is made that men of the two nations shall meet once a month at a feast and that, each month, a Scandinavian and a Greek shall each tell a tale connected with his homeland. This gives Morris the

opportunity to retell some of the best Greek legends and give also the fruits of an intensive study of Norse story which he had just before embarked upon. For the month of November the Norse tale is a translation of the Laxdale Saga, telling of the struggle, in a solitary Icelandic valley, of warrior men for the hand of Gudrun. Morris renames the tale *The Lovers of Gudrun*, and the selection given relates the tragic crisis when Kiartan Olafson is slain by Bodli, the husband of Gudrun, who had, nevertheless, loved Kiartan the most of those who sought her hand. The episode is related with all the grimness of the original; the Norse sense of fate broods over the whole narration, and the language is packed and restrained in a way nowhere else so successfully followed by Morris.

SWINBURNE

Romantic and anti-Victorian, Republican and anti-Christian—these are all terms attached to the name of Swinburne, for all have relevancy to parts of his poetic output. When the '60's of the century had seen the extinction of the poetic spirit of Arnold and settling down of Tennyson to the steady production of *Idylls of the King*, with their thinly-veiled praise of the conventional Victorian virtues, and of Browning to the composition of philosophical disquisitions in verse with brief interludes of lyrical singing, there burst upon the English literary world the storm of *Poems and Ballads* in 1866, and the echoes of that explosion among critics and moralists kept letters alive till the '70's brought something of a new world of ideas and the second flowering-time of Rossetti.

The terrible éclat of the first series of *Poems and Ballads* could never be repeated, but *Songs before Sunrise* in 1871 confirmed believers in Swinburne of the enduring and growing powers of his genius. He had always attached himself with violent partisanship to the cause of political freedom, worshipping Victor Hugo and Mazzini, exulting in the overthrow of the empire of Napoleon III and the Austrian dominion over Italy, and the *Songs* contained some of his most ringing denunciations and apotheoses in political affairs.

By the side of these poems appeared one of a different cast which is by itself sufficient to vindicate Swinburne from the charge of relying on anapæstic magnificence and torrential language for his immortality. This is *Hertha*, the poem of which Swinburne himself said: "Of all I have done, I rate *Hertha* highest as a single piece, finding in it the most of lyric force and music combined with the most of condensed and clarified thought."

He had already, in other poems, expressed the conviction that man made God after his own image, out of his fears of the unknown, and that the religions of the world, especially Christianity in its conventional form, had only served to develop this fear of the unknown and to keep man's soul in bondage. Swinburne believes infinitely in man and in the power of man to conquer all his enemies and live the fullest life achievable by him simply by believing in himself and in his own soul. Man's soul becomes, therefore, the new God for Swinburne, the force which was, from the beginning, the creator and preserver and saviour of mankind, by faith in which man can deliver himself from his worst enemy—abject fear of forces not himself. *Hertha* is the

deification of the Swinburnian God, the Over-Soul which is human because every human soul is a reflex of it, which is divine because it is immortal, and which demands only that man shall fulfil himself to his utmost and achieve liberty in all things.

LORD DE TABLEY

Below the rank of the previous poets noticed, but one of the foremost of the second rank and a delightful poet and lovable man, is John Byrne Leicester, third and last Baron de Tabley, born in 1835, educated at Eton and Oxford in the conventional aristocratic way, diplomat and lawyer for a brief season, expert botanist and scientist in other fields, a poet who had a *succès d'estime* with a powerful tragedy *Philoctetes* in the Greek manner in which he dares comparison with Sophocles, who treated the same subject. De Tabley struggled with a desperately sensitive temperament towards poetic achievement which was always honoured by the discerning few but never became popular.

In 1873 he published a volume called *Searching the Net*, in which appears the *Count of Senlis* which is here given as an example of his work. It is a dramatic monologue, which savours of both Tennyson and Browning in its conception and yet differs from both in that the delicate humour, the adumbration of a whole period of history—that of pre-Revolutionary France—are growths of a personality more shy than that of either of the great poets and an historical penetration perhaps more painstaking. In these 150 odd lines one comes to appreciate the whole atmosphere

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of the *ancien régime* in its dying days and the sullen dumb force of the people which was to overthrow it but which was as yet scarcely conscious of its own existence.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

"The historical ballad of *The White Ship*," says William Michael Rossetti, the critic-brother of the poet, "was composed mainly, if not wholly, in 1880. My brother sent the MS. to Madox Brown (a later Pre-Raphaelite), then living in Manchester; observing that every point in his treatment of the subject, even down to the incident of the 'fair boy dressed in black' . . . was derived from the ancient chronicles." Madox Brown, in replying, gave Rossetti some hints on naval phraseology, from his own early experiences of sea-life, which the poet undertook to adopt. The poem was first published in *Ballads and Sonnets*, 1881, along with *Rose Mary*, *The King's Tragedy*, and *The House of Life*, the former two being also long narrative poems, the last a century of sonnets.

This poem is, then, a fruit of the second flowering of Rossetti's poetic genius, for, except for a few contributions to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* and his translations of pre-Dantaic Italian poetry, he had published nothing in this field since *The Germ* of 1850.

Rossetti's style is at once naturalistic and ornate. He is able to create an extraordinary atmosphere of life-likeness by the collection of significant details, physical for the most part, and, according to the selection of these details, can make his poem richly sensuous, as with *The Blessed Damozel*, or bare and grim, as with

The White Ship. Everywhere throughout the poem the influence of the painter's eye is visible, but there is, in *The White Ship* and *The King's Tragedy* at least, present also a power of vivid narration of incidents for their dramatic force. His weakness, as a narrative poet, lies in his length; he tends to dwell too long on parts of his story and to give too much attention to delineation of minutiæ of incident and character; the verse-form, also, of *The White Ship* threatens to grow monotonous while it attempts to catch the simplicity of the early ballads. However, the poem stands as an outstanding example of the Artistic Ballad, and the tragic sense of impending doom is finely given.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Thompson, born in 1859 and dying in 1907, came of a family which in the previous generation had become Roman Catholic, and he was accordingly brought up in an atmosphere of Catholic devotion and educated with a view to the priesthood. An unfortunate turn was taken towards medicine, on the study of which he unwillingly spent six years with no result, and, feeling his father's reproaches at his non-success, he left suddenly for London in 1885 to seek his fortune. With no capacity whatever for making a livelihood, he spent the next three years in ever-increasing misery intensified by the use of opium to stave off neuralgia.

At length two poems and a prose essay, sent by him to *Merry England*, a journal to which a literary uncle had contributed, brought him the friendship of the editor, Wilfrid Meynell, and an association which led to his conquest of the opium habit and to the power,

so far as his shattered health permitted, of continuous composition in prose as well as verse.

The Hound of Heaven was the principal poem in his first volume of *Poems*, published in 1893, and awakened an immediate response notwithstanding its exacting religious character. It describes, with imagery of cosmic proportions and in language heavily freighted with reminiscences of Thompson's reading of Blake and the seventeenth-century English religious poets, the "Metaphysicals", the conflict in the human soul between the love of God and the love for human and natural joys, and the conduct and issue of the struggle is developed according to the strictest principles of Catholic dogma.

The poetic appeal of the poem, however, completely outbids the dogmatic appeal, whence *The Hound of Heaven* has found admirers for over a generation among the religious of every persuasion and the non-religious also who have a sensibility for the mystical in thought and the rich and subtle in poetic speech.

Tennyson

IN MEMORIAM

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
" This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth, " Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
And think that, somewhere in the waste,
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

So might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To cloak me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His licence in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall,
I feel it when I sorrow most,
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes. I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—

The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

Matthew Arnold

THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtlety of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while well exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he

said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned."—*Glanvil's Vanity of Dogmatising*, 1661.

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;
  Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes:
    No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
  Nor let the bawling fellows rack their throats,
    Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.
      But when the fields are still,
  And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
    And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
    Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green;
      Come, Shepherd, and again renew the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,
  In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
    His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
  And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
    Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use:
      Here will I sit and wait,
  While to my ear from uplands far away
    The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
    With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
      All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd in this nook o'er the high half-reap'd field,
  And here till sun-down, Shepherd, will I be
    Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,

And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep:
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfum'd showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers:

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again,
The story of that Oxford scholar poor
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tir'd of knocking at Preferment's door,
One summer morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the Gipsy lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
Two scholars whom at college erst he knew
Met him, and of his way of life enquir'd.
Whereat he answer'd, that the Gipsy crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desir'd
The workings of men's brains;
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will:
" And I," he said, " the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart:
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he left them, and return'd no more,
But rumours hung about the country-side
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the Gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse on the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, mid their drink and clatter, he would fly:
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer heats,
Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground.
Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe
Returning home on summer nights have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the slow punt swings round:

And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream:

And then they land, and thou art seen no more.
Maidens who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leaf'd white anemone—
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves—
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none has words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown:
Mark'd thy outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air;
But, when they came from bathing, thou wert gone.

At some lone homestead on the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee watching, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In Autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood,
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edg'd way
Pitch their smok'd tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of gray,
Above the forest ground call'd Thessaly—
The blackbird picking food
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face towards Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range,

Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fell,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a Gipsy tribe:
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid;
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave—
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours.
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'T is that from change to change their being rolls:
'T is that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having us'd our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been.

Thou hast not liv'd, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire:
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead—
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire.
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas, have not!

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O Life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven: and we,
Vague half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose weak resolves never have been fulfill'd;

For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day—
Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await it too?

Yes, we await it, but it still delays,
And then we suffer; and amongst us One,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was sooth'd, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest: and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,
With close-lipp'd Patience for our only friend,
Sad Patience, too near neighbour to Despair:
But none has hope like thine.
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gestures stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude.

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a *free onward impulse brushing through,*
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales,
Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, *though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;*
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,

Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
— As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægaean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine;
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves;
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail,
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the Western Straits, and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

Robert Browning

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what 's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, it 's past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine 's my cloister: hunt it up,
Do,—harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
Weke, weke, that 's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters? Then, you 'll take
Your hand away that 's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he 's a certain . . . how d' ye call?
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
In the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!

Remember and tell me, the day you 're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you.
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He 's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I 'm not angry! Bid your hang-dogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbours me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all 's come square again. I 'd like his face—
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand (" Look you, now," as who should say)
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It 's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I 'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let 's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here 's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I 've been three weeks shut within my mew,

A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night—
Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song,—
Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good 's in life since?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—three slim shapes—
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
That 's all I 'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met,—
Flower o' the rose,
If I 've been merry, what matter who knows?
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,

You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake
Mine 's shaved,—a monk, you say—the st
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum 's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or
On fig skins, melon-parings, rinds and shu
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I wen
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one h
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six w
While I stood munching my first bread th
" So, boy, you 're minded," quoth the goo
Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-ti
" To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . The mo
thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made
I did renounce the world, its pr
Palace, farm, villa, shop and ba
Trash, such as these poor dev
Have given their hearts to—
Well, sir, I found in time.

'T was not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!
" Let 's see what the urchin 's fit for "—that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! they tried me with their books.
Lord, they 'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, " amo " I love!
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains—
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped,—
How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonitions from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use:
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,

Found nose and eyes and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d' ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon they bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, their walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folks at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years)
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,

Which the intense eyes looked through, came at eve
On tip-toe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
The brute took growling, prayed, and then was gone.
I painted all, then cried " 'T is ask and have—
Choose, for more 's ready!"—laid the ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked,—taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies,—" That 's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman 's like the Prior's niece who comes
To care about his asthma: it 's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked—
Their betters took their turn to see and say:
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. " How? what 's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it 's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there 's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it 's a fire, smoke . . . no, it 's not . . .
It 's vapour done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It 's . . . well, what matters talking, it 's the soul!

Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here 's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising,—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our heads
With wonder at lines, colours, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She 's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say,—
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off—
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow 's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks nought.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I 've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
Or say there 's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)

If you get simple beauty and nought else,
You get about the best thing God invents,—
That 's somewhat. And you 'll find the soul you have
missed,
Within yourself when you return Him thanks.
" Rub all out!" Well, well, there 's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I 'm grown a man no doubt, I 've broken bounds—
You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I 'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it 's fast holding by the rings in front—
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—" It 's Art's decline, my son!
You 're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico 's the man, you 'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you 'll never make the third!"
Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I 'll stick to mine!
I 'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they 're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? so, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them—sometimes do, and sometimes don't,

For, doing most, there 's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints—
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(*Flower o' the peach,*
Death for us all, and his own life for each!)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
The world and life 's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! the old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no—
May they or mayn't they? all I want 's the thing
Settled for ever one way: as it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself.
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught—
I always see the Garden and God there
A-making man's wife—and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I 'm a beast, I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star 's about to shine,

What will hap some day. We 've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop—
His name is Guidi—he 'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk—
He picks my practice up—he 'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what 's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike—
However, you 're my man, you 've seen the world
—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!
—For what? do you feel thankful, ay or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What 's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you say.
But why not do as well as say,—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint anyone, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already—nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There 's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark, we 're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed

Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that—
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world 's no blot for us,
Nor blank—it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
" Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior: " when your meaning 's plain
It does not say to folks—remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed cross-wise, or, what 's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
" How looks my painting, now the scaffold 's down?"
I ask a brother: " Hugely," he returns—
" Already not one phiz of your three slaves
That turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But 's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,

The pious people have so eased their own
When coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you 'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now!
It 's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There 's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast of my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to church at midsummer.
And then in the front, of course a saint or two—
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,

And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz, (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotions, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—
Mazed, motionless and moon-struck—I 'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where 's a hole, where 's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"
—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he 's none of you! Could Saint John there draw—
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you 're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go

The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say
And so all 's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights!
The street 's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There 's the grey beginning. Zooks!

Christina Rossetti

THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS

Till all sweet gums and juices flow,
Till the blossom of blossoms blow,
The long hours go and come and go,
  The bride she sleepeth, waketh, sleepeth,
Waiting for one whose coming is slow:—
    Hark! the bride weepeth.

" How long shall I wait, come heat come rime?"—
" Till the strong Prince comes, who must come in time "
(Her women say), " there 's a mountain to climb,
  A river to ford. Sleep, dream and sleep:
Sleep " (they say): " we 've muffled the chime,
    Better dream than weep."

In his world-end palace the strong Prince sat,
Taking his ease on cushion and mat,
Close at hand lay his staff and his hat.
  " When wilt thou start? the bride waits, O youth."—
" Now the moon 's at full; I tarried for that,
    Now I start in truth.

" But tell me first, true voice of my doom,
Of my veiled bride in her maiden bloom;
Keeps she watch through glare and through gloom,
  Watch for me asleep and awake?"—
" *Spell-bound she watches in one white room,*
    And is patient for thy sake.

" By her head lilies and rosebuds grow;
The lilies droop, will the rosebuds blow?
The silver slim lilies hang the head low;
  Their stream is scanty, their sunshine rare;
Let the sun blaze out, and let the stream flow,
    They will blossom and wax fair.

" *Red and white poppies grow at her feet,*
The blood red wait for sweet summer heat,
Wrapped in bud-coats hairy and neat;
  But the white buds swell, one day they will burst,
Will open their death-cups drowsy and sweet—
    Which will open the first?"

Then a hundred sad voices lifted a wail,
And a hundred glad voices piped on the gale.
" Time is short, life is short," they took up the tale:
  " Life is sweet, love is sweet, use to-day while you may;
Love is sweet, and to-morrow may fail;
    Love is sweet, use to-day."

While the song swept by, beseeching and meek,
Up rose the Prince with a flush on his cheek,
Up he rose to stir and to seek,
  Going forth in the joy of his strength;
Strong of limb if of purpose weak,
    Starting at length.

Forth he set in the breezy morn,
Crossing green fields of nodding corn,
As goodly a Prince as ever was born;
  Carolling with the carolling lark;—
Sure his bride will be won and worn,
    Ere fall of the dark.

So light his step, so merry his smile,
A milkmaid loitered beside a stile,
Set down her pail and rested awhile,
  A wave-haired milkmaid, rose and white;
The Prince, who had journeyed at least a mile,
    Grew athirst at the sight.

"Will you give me a morning draught?"—
"You 're kindly welcome," she said and laughed.
He lifted the pail, new milk he quaffed;
  Then wiping his curly black beard like silk:
"Whitest cow that ever was calved
    Surely gave you this milk."

Was it milk now, or was it cream?
Was she a maid, or an evil dream?
Her eyes began to glitter and gleam;
He would have gone, but he stayed instead;
Green they gleamed as he looked in them:
" Give me my fee," she said.—

" I will give you a jewel of gold."—
" Not so; gold is heavy and cold."—
" I will give you a velvet fold
Of foreign work your beauty to deck."—
" Better I like my kerchief rolled
Light and white round my neck."—

" Nay," cried he, " but fix your own fee."—
She laughed, " You may give the full moon to me;
Or else sit under this apple tree
Here for one idle day by my side;
After that I 'll let you go free,
And the world is wide."

Loth to stay, but to leave her slack,
He half turned away, then he quite turned back.
For courtesy's sake he could not lack
To redeem his own royal pledge;
Ahead too the windy heaven lowered black
With a fire-cloven edge.

So he stretched his length in the apple-tree shade,
Lay and laughed and talked to the maid,
Who twisted her hair in a cunning braid
  And writhed it shining in serpent-coils,
And held him a day and a night fast laid
    In her subtle toils.

At the death of night and the birth of day,
When the owl left off his sober play
And the bat hung himself out of the way,
  Woke the song of mavis and merle,
And heaven put off its hodden grey
    For mother-o'-pearl.

Peeped up daisies here and there,
Here, there, and everywhere;
Rose a hopeful lark in the air,
  Spreading out towards the sun his breast;
While the moon set solemn and fair
    Away in the West.

" Up, up, up," called the watchman lark,
In his clear réveillée: " Hearken, oh hark!
Press to the high goal, fly to the mark.
  Up, O sluggard, new morn is born;
If still asleep when the night falls dark,
    Thou must wait a second morn."

"Up, up, up," sad glad voices swelled:
"So the tree falls and lies as it 's felled.
Be thy bands loosed, O sleeper, long held
In sweet sleep whose end is not sweet.
Be the slackness girt and the softness quelled
And the slowness fleet."

Off he set. The grass grew rare,
A blight lurked in the darkening air,
The very moss grew hueless and spare,
The last daisy stood all astunt;
Behind his back the soil lay bare,
But barer in front.

A land of chasm and rent, a land
Of rugged blackness on either hand:
If water trickled its track was tanned
With an edge of rust to the chink;
If one stamped on stone or on sand
It returned a clink.

A lifeless land, a loveless land,
Without lair or nest on either hand:
Only scorpions jerked in the sand,
Black as black iron, or dusty pale;
From point to point sheer rock was manned
By scorpions in mail.

A land of neither life nor death,
Where no man buildeth or fashioneth,
Where none draws living or dying breath;
No man cometh or goeth there,
No man doeth or seeketh, saith,
In the stagnant air.

Some old volcanic upset must
Have rent the crust and blackened the crust;
Wrenched and ribbed it beneath its dust
Above earth's molten centre at seethe,
Heaved and heaped it by huge upthrust
Of fire beneath.

Untrodden before, untrodden since:
Tedious land for a social Prince;
Halting, he scanned the outs and ins,
Endless, labyrinthine, grim,
Of the solitude that made him wince,
Laying wait for him.

By bulging rock and gaping cleft,
Even of half mere daylight reft,
Rueful he peered to right and left,
Muttering in his altered mood:
"The fate is hard that weaves my weft,
Though my lot be good."

Dim the changes of day to night,
Of night scarce dark to day not bright.
Still his road wound towards the right,
Still he went, and still he went,
Till one night he espied a light,
In his discontent.

Out it flashed from a yawn-mouthed cave,
Like a red-hot eye from a grave.
No man stood there of whom to crave
Rest for wayfarer plodding by:
Though the tenant were churl or knave
The Prince might try.

In he passed and tarried not,
Groping his way from spot to spot,
Towards where the cavern flare glowed hot:—
An old, old mortal, cramped and double,
Was peering into a seething-pot,
In a world of trouble.

The veriest atomy he looked,
With grimy fingers clutching and crooked,
Tight skin, a nose all bony and hooked,
And a shaking, sharp, suspicious way;
His blinking eyes had scarcely brooked
The light of day.

Stared the Prince, for the sight was new;
Stared, but asked without more ado:
" May a weary traveller lodge with you,
Old father, here in your lair?
In your country the inns seem few,
And scanty the fare."

The head turned not to hear him speak;
The old voice whistled as through a leak
(Out it came in a quavering squeak):
" Work for wage is a bargain fit:
If there 's aught of mine that you seek
You must work for it.

" Buried alive from light and air
This year is the hundredth year,
I feed my fire with a sleepless care,
Watching my potion wane or wax:
Elixir of Life is simmering there,
And but one thing lacks.

" If you 're fain to lodge here with me,
Take that pair of bellows you see—
Too heavy for my old hands they be—
Take the bellows and puff and puff:
When the steam curls rosy and free
The broth 's boiled enough.

"Then take your choice of all I have;
I will give you life if you crave.
Already I'm mildewed for the grave,
  So first myself I must drink my fill:
But all the rest may be yours, to save
    Whomever you will."

"Done," quoth the Prince, and the bargain stood.
First he piled on resinous wood,
Next plied the bellows in hopeful mood;
  Thinking, "My love and I will live.
If I tarry, why life is good,
    And she may forgive."

The pot began to bubble and boil;
The old man cast in essence and oil,
He stirred all up with a triple coil
  Of gold and silver and iron wire,
Dredged in a pinch of virgin soil,
    And fed the fire.

But still the steam curled watery white;
Night turned to day and day to night;
One thing lacked, by his feeble sight
  Unseen, unguessed by his feeble mind:
Life might miss him, but Death the blight
    Was sure to find.

So when the hundredth year was full
The thread was cut and finished the school.
Death snapped the old worn-out tool,
  Snapped him short while he stood and stirred
(Though stiff he stood as a stiff-necked mule)
    With never a word.

Thus at length the old crab was nipped.
The dead hand slipped, the dead finger dipped
In the broth as the dead man slipped,—
  That same instant, a rosy red
Flushed the steam, and quivered and clipped
    Round the dead old head.

The last ingredient was supplied
(Unless the dead man mistook or lied).
Up started the Prince, he cast aside
  The bellows plied through the tedious trial,
Made sure that his host had died,
    And filled a phial.

" One night's rest," thought the Prince: " This done,
Forth I start with the rising sun:
With the morrow I rise and run,
  Come what will of wind or of weather.
This draught of Life when my Bride is won
    We 'll drink together."

Thus the dead man stayed in his grave,
Self-chosen, the dead man in his cave;
There he stayed, were he fool or knave,
  Or honest seeker who had not found:
While the Prince outside was prompt to crave
    Sleep on the ground.

"If she watches, go bid her sleep;
Bid her sleep, for the road is steep:
He can sleep who holdeth her cheap,
  Sleep and wake and sleep again.
Let him sow, one day he shall reap,
    Let him sow the grain.

"When there blows a sweet garden rose,
Let it bloom and wither if no man knows:
But if one knows when the sweet thing blows,
  Knows, and lets it open and drop,
If but a nettle his garden grows
    He hath earned the crop."

Through his sleep the summons rang,
Into his ears it sobbed and it sang.
Slow he woke with a drowsy pang,
  Shook himself without much debate,
Turned where he saw green branches hang,
    Started though late.

For the black land was travelled o'er,
He should see the grim land no more.
A flowering country stretched before
His face when the lovely day came back:
He hugged the phial of Life he bore,
And resumed his track.

By willow courses he took his path,
Spied what a nest the kingfisher hath,
Marked the fields green to aftermath,
Marked where the red-brown field-mouse ran,
Loitered awhile for a deep-stream bath,
Yawned for a fellow-man.

Up on the hills not a soul in view,
In the vale not many nor few;
Leaves, still leaves, and nothing new.
It 's oh for a second maiden, at least,
To bear the flagon, and taste it too,
And flavour the feast.

Lagging he moved, and apt to swerve;
Lazy of limb, but quick of nerve.
At length the water-bed took a curve,
The deep river swept its bankside bare;
Waters streamed from the hill-reserve—
Waters here, waters there.

High above and deep below,
Bursting, bubbling, swelling the flow,
Like hill-torrents after the snow,—
  Bubbling, gurgling, in whirling strife,
Swaying, sweeping, to and fro,—
    He must swim for his life.

Which way?—which way?—his eyes grew dim
With the dizzying whirl—which way to swim?
The thunderous downshoot deafened him;
  Half he choked in the lashing spray:
Life is sweet and the grave is grim—
    Which way?—which way?

A flash of light, a shout from the strand:
" This wāy—this way; here lies the land!"
His phial clutched in one drowning hand;
  He catches—misses—catches a rope;
His feet slip on the slipping sand:
    Is there life?—is there hope?

Just saved, without pulse or breath,—
Scarcely saved from the gulp of death;
Laid where a willow shadoweth—
  Laid where a swelling turf is smooth.
(O Bride! but the Bridegroom lingereth
    For all thy sweet youth.)

Kind hands do and undo,
Kind voices whisper and coo:
" I will chafe his hands "—" And I "—" And you
  Raise his head, put his hair aside."
(If many laugh, one well may rue:
    Sleep on, thou Bride.)

So the Prince was tended with care:
One wrung foul ooze from his clustered hair;
Two chafed his hands, and did not spare;
  But one held his drooping head breast-high,
Till his eyes oped, and at unaware,
    They met eye to eye.

Oh, a moon face in a shadowy place,
And a light touch and a winsome grace,
And thrilling tender voice that says:
  " Safe from waters that seek the sea—
Cold waters by rugged ways—
    Safe with me."

While overhead bird whistles to bird,
And round about plays a gamesome herd;
" Safe with us "—some take up the word—
  " Safe with us, dear lord and friend:
All the sweeter if long deferred
    Is rest in the end."

Had he stayed to weigh and to scan,
He had been more or less than a man:
He did what a young man can,
  Spoke of toil and an arduous way—
Toil to-morrow, while golden ran
    The sands of to-day.

Slip past, slip fast,
Uncounted hours from first to last,
Many hours till the last is past,
  Many hours dwindling to one—
One hour whose die is cast,
    One last hour gone.

Come, gone—gone for ever—
Gone as an unreturning river—
Gone as to death the merriest liver—
  Gone as the year at the dying fall—
To-morrow, to-day, yesterday, never—
    Gone once for all.

Came at length the starting-day,
With last words, and last, last words to say,
With bodiless cries from far away—
  Chiding wailing voices that rang
Like a trumpet call to the tug and fray;
    And thus they sang:

"Is there life?—the lamp burns low;
Is there hope?—the coming is slow:
The promise promised so long ago,
  The long promise, has not been kept.
Does she live?—does she die?—she slumbers so
    Who so oft has wept.

"Does she live?—does she die?—she languisheth
As a lily drooping to death,
As a drought-worn bird with failing breath,
  As a lovely vine without a stay,
As a tree whereof the owner saith,
    'Hew it down to-day'."

Stung by that word the Prince was fain
To start on his tedious road again.
He crossed the stream where a ford was plain,
  He clomb the opposite bank though steep,
And swore to himself to strain and attain
    Ere he tested sleep.

Huge before him a mountain frowned
With foot of rock on the valley ground,
And head with snows incessant crowned,
  And a cloud mantle about its strength,
And a path which the wild goat hath not found
    In its breadth and length.

But he was strong to do and dare:
If a host had withstood him there,
He had braved a host with little care
  In his lusty youth and his pride,
Tough to grapple though weak to snare.
    He comes, O Bride.

Up he went where the goat scarce clings,
Up where the eagle folds her wings,
Past the green line of living things,
  Where the sun cannot warm the cold,—
Up he went as a flame enrings
    Where there seems no hold.

Up a fissure barren and black,
Till the eagles tired upon his track,
And the clouds were left behind his back,
  Up till the utmost peak was past.
Then he gasped for breath and his strength fell slack;
    He paused at last.

Before his face a valley spread
Where fatness laughed, wine, oil, and bread,
Where all fruit-trees their sweetness shed,
  Where all birds made love to their kind,
Where jewels twinkled, and gold lay red
    And not hard to find.

Midway down the mountain side
(On its green slope the path was wide)
Stood a house for a royal bride,
  Built all of changing opal stone,
The royal palace, till now descried
    In his dreams alone.

Less bold than in days of yore,
Doubting now though never before,
Doubting he goes and lags the more:
  Is the time late? does the day grow dim?
Rose, will she open the crimson core
    Of her heart to him?

Take heart of grace! the potion of Life
May go far to woo him a wife:
If she frown, yet a lover's strife
  Lightly raised can be laid again:
A hasty word is never the knife
    To cut love in twain.

Far away stretched the royal land,
Fed by dew, by a spice-wind fanned:
Light labour more, and his foot would stand
  On the threshold, all labour done;
Easy pleasure laid at his hand,
    And the dear Bride won.

His slackening steps pause at the gate—
Does she wake or sleep?—the time is late—
Does she sleep now, or watch and wait?
  She has watched, she has waited long,
Watching athwart the golden grate
    With a patient song.

Fling the golden portals wide,
The Bridegroom comes to his promised Bride;
Draw the gold-stiff curtains aside,
  Let them look on each other's face,
She in her meekness, he in his pride—
    Day wears apace.

Day is over, the day that wore.
What is this that comes through the door,
The face covered, the feet before?
  This that coming takes his breath;
This Bride not seen, to be seen no more
    Save of Bridegroom Death?

Veiled figures carrying her
Sweep by yet make no stir;
There is a smell of spice and myrrh,
  A bride-chant burdened with one name;
The bride-song rises steadier
    Than the torches' flame:

"Too late for love, too late for joy,
  Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
  You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
  Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
  Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
    You made it wait.

"Ten years ago, five years ago,
  One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
  Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
  Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
  The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
    To melt the snow.

"Is she fair now as she lies?
  Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
  With gold-dust on her hair.
Now these are poppies in her locks,
  White poppies she must wear;

Must wear a veil to shroud her face
  And the want graven there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
    Cast off the care?

"We never saw her with a smile
  Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
  Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
  Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
  Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
  That used to be so brown.

"We never heard her speak in haste:
  Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
  As it was meet·
Her heart sat silent through the noise
  And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
  No hurry in her feet;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
  That she might run to greet.

"You should have wept her yesterday,
  Wasting upon her bed:

But wherefore should you weep to-day
  That she is dead?
Lo, we who love weep not to-day,
  But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
  Your roses are too red:
Let be these poppies, not for you
  Cut down and spread."

William Morris

THE SLAYING OF KIARTAN OLAFSON

Now Kiartan rode from Knoll betimes that day,
And goodman Thorkel brought him on the way
With twelve men more, and therewithal they ride
Fast from the west, but where the pass grew wide
And opened into Swinedale, Kiartan stayed
His company, and unto Thorkel said.
" Thanks have thou, goodman, for thy following,
Now get thee back, I fear not anything
'Twixt this and Herdholt."
" Well," the goodman said,
" Time enow is there yet to be waylaid
Ere thou art safe at home; let us ride on."

" Nay," Kiartan said, " the thing shall not be done
All men of heart will say that heart I lack,
If I must have an army at my back
Where'er I go, for fear of Oswif's sons.

Fare thee well, goodman, get thee back at once!
And therewithal take this to comfort thee,
That Bodli yet is scarce mine enemy,
And holds aback those brethren; wot ye well,
Too strange a story would it be to tell,
If these should overcome my father's son;
Besides, without thee I ride not alone."

So back the goodman turned, misdoubting though,
In spite of all how yet the day would go,
And up the dale rode Kiartan: An the Black,
The man who erst the stolen sword brought back,
Was with him there, and one named Thorarin,
As slowly now the midway dale they win.

Now, as I find it written in my tale,
There went that morn a goodman of the dale,
About those bents his mares and foals to see,
His herdsman with him; these saw presently
Up from the east the men of Bathstead ride,
And take their stand along a streamlet's side
Deep sunken in a hollow, where the mouth
Of the strait path turns somewhat to the south,
From out the dale; now, since the men they knew,
Much they misdoubted what these came to do;
But when they turned them from the sunken stream,
And saw the sun on others' weapons gleam,
And three armed men come riding from the west;

And when they knew the tallest and the best
For Kiartan Olafson, therewith no more
They doubted aught.
Then said the herdsman: "Sore
The troubles are that on the country-side
Shall fall, if this same meeting shall betide;
He is a great chief; let us warn him then!"

"Yea, yea!" his master said, "and all such men
As fate leads unto death, that we may be
'Twixt the two millstones ground right merrily,
And cursed as we cry out! thou art a fool,
Who needs must be the beaker and the stool
For great men's use, emptied of joys of life
For others' joy, then kicked by in the strife
When they are drunken; come, beside the way,
Let us lie close to see the merry play!
For such a swordsman as is Kiartan, we
Shall scarce behold on this side of the sea;
And heavy odds he hath against him too.
These are great men—good, let them hack and hew
Their noble bodies for our poor delight!"

So down the bent they slipped, and as they might
Lurked by the road, and thus they tell their tale:

Ere Kiartan reached the strait place of the dale,
High up upon the brook-bank Bodli lay,
So that his helm was just seen from the way;

Then Ospak went to him, and clear they heard
Across the road his rough and threatening word:
" What dost thou here? thou hast bethought thee then
To warn thy friend that here lurk all-armed men.
Thou knowest Gudrun's mind—or know'st it not,
But know'st that we within a trap have got
Thee and the cursed wretch, the proud Mire-blade,
The Thief, the King's-pimp, the white Herdholt maid.
Come, sister's husband, get thee lower down!"

The foam flew from the lips of the fierce clown
As thus he spake, but Bodli rose and said:
" Think'st thou I armed because I was afraid
)f thee and thine this morn? If thou knew'st well
)f love or honour, somewhat might I tell
Vhy I am here with thee—If will I have,
Kiartan, who was my friend, this day to save,
lethink thee I might do it otherwise
'han e'en by showing what in ambush lies!
-How if I stood beside him?"

" Down with thee
ınd hold thy peace! or he will hear and see."

For so it was that Kiartan drew so near
'hat now the herd their clinking bits might hear,
lorne down upon the light wind: on he came,
inging an old song made in Odin's fame,
Ierry and careless on that sunny morn;
Vhen suddenly out rang the Bathstead horn,

And sharply he drew rein, and looked around;
Then did the lurkers from the gully bound
And made on toward them, and down leapt all three,
And Kiartan glanced around, and speedily
Led toward a rock that was beside the way,
And there they shifted them to stand at bay.

Most noble then looked Kiartan, said the herd,
Nor ever saw I any less afeard;
Yet, when his watchful eye on Bodli fell,
A change came o'er him that were hard to tell,
But that he dropped his hands at first, as one
Who thinks that all is over now and done;
Yet, says the neatherd, soon his brows did clear,
And from his strong hand whirled forth his spear,
And down fell Thorolf clattering on the road.
He cried: "Down goes the thief beneath his load,
One man struck off the tale! I have heard tell
Of such as dealt with more and came off well."

Silence a space but for the mail rings; then
Over the dusty road on rushed those men;
And, says the herd, there saw I for a space
Confused gleam of swords about that place,
And from their clatter now and then did come
Sharp cry, or groan, or panting shout, as home
Went point or edge: but pale as death one stood,
With sheathed sword, looking on the clashing wood,

And that was Bodli Thorleikson. Then came
A lull a little space in that wild game.
The Bathstead men drew off, and still the three
Stood there scarce hurt as far as I could see;
But of the Bathstead men I deem some bled,
Though all stood firm; then Ospak cried and said:

"O Bodli, what thing wilt thou prophesy
For us, since like a seer thou standest by
And see'st thine house beat back? well then for thee
Will I be wise, foretelling what shall be—
A cold bed, and a shamed board, shalt thou have,
Yea, and ere many days a chased dog's grave,
If thou bringst home to-day a bloodless sword!"

But yet for all that answered he no word,
But stood as made of iron, though the breeze
Blew his long black hair round his cheek-pieces
And fanned his scarlet kirtle.
"Time we lose,"
Another cried, "if Bodli so shall choose,
Let him deal with us when this man is slain."
Then stoutly to the game they gat again
And played awhile, and now withal I saw
That rather did the sons of Oswif draw
Toward Thorarin and An, until the first,
From midst the knot of those onsetters burst,
And ran off west, followed by two stout men,

Not Oswif's sons; and An the Black fell then
Wounded to death, I deemed, but over him
Fell Gudlaug, Oswif's nephew, with a limb
Shorn off by Kiartan's sword: then once again
There came a short lull in the iron rain;
And then the four fell on him furiously
Awhile, then gave aback, and I could see
The noble Kiartan, with his mail-coat rent,
His shield hung low adown, his sword-blade bent,
Panting for breath, but still without a wound.

While as a man by some strong spell fast bound,
Without a will for aught, did Bodli stand,
Nor once cast eyes on the waylayers' band,
Nor once glanced round at Kiartan, but stared still
Upon the green side of the grassy hill
Over against him, e'en as he did deem
It might yet yawn as in a dreadful dream,
And from its bowels give some marvel birth,
That in a ghostly wise should change the earth,
And make that day nought. But as there he stood
Ospak raised up his hand, all red with blood,
And smote him on the face, and cried:
"Go home,
Half-hearted traitor, e'en as thou hast come,
And bear my blood to Gudrun!"
Still no word
Came from his pale lips, and the rover's sword
Abode within the scabbard. Ospak said:

"O lover, art thou grown too full of dread
To look him in the face whom thou feardst not
To cozen of the fair thing he had got?
O faint-heart thief of love, why drawest thou back,
When all the love thou erst so sore didst lack
With one stroke thou mayst win?"
He did not hear,

Or seemed to hear not; but now loud and clear
Kiartan cried out his name from that high place,
And at the first sound Bodli turned his face
This way and that, in puzzled hapless wise,
Till 'twixt the spears his eyes met Kiartan's eyes;
Then his mouth quivered, and he writhed aside,
And with his mail-clad hands his face did hide,
And trembled like one palsy-struck, while high
Over the doubtful field did Kiartan cry:

"Yea, they are right! be not so hardly moved,
O kinsman, foster-brother, friend beloved
Of the old days, friend well forgiven now!
Come nigher, come, that thou my face mayst know,
Then draw thy sword and thrust from off the earth
The fool that so hath spoilt thy days of mirth,
Win long lone days of love by Gudrun's side!
My life is spoilt, why longer do I bide
To vex thee, friend?—strike then for happy life!
I said thou mightst not gaze upon the strife
Far off; bethink thee then, who sits at home
And waits thee, Gudrun, mine own love, and come,

Come, for the midday sun is over-bright,
And I am wearying for the restful night!"

And now had Bodli dropped his hands adown,
And shown his face all drawn into a frown
Of doubt and shame; his hand was on his sword,
Even ere Kiartan spake that latest word;
Still trembling, now he drew it from its sheath,
And the bright sun ran down the fated death,
And e'en the sons of Oswif shuddered now,
As with wild eyes and heavy steps and slow
He turned toward Kiartan; beat the heart in me
Till I might scarce breathe, for I looked to see
A dreadful game; the wind of that midday
Beat 'gainst the hill-sides; a hound far away
Barked by some homestead's door; the grey ewe's bleat
Sounded near by; but that dull sound of feet,
And the thin tinkling of the mail-coat rings
Drowned in my ears the sound of other things,
As less and less the space betwixt them grew;
I shut my eyes as one the end who knew,
But straight, perforce, I opened them again,
Woe worth the while!

As one who looks in vain
For help, looked Kiartan round; then raised his shield,
And poised his sword as though he ne'er would yield
Even when the earth was sinking; yet a while,
And o'er his face there came a quivering smile,
As into Bodli's dreadful face he gazed;

Then my heart sank within me, as all dazed,
I saw the flash of swords that never met,
And heard how Kiartan cried:
"Ah, better yet

For me to die than live on even so!
Alas! friend, do the deed that thou must do!
Oh, lonely death!—farewell, farewell, farewell!"

And clattering on the road his weapons fell,
And almost ere they touched the bloody dust,
Into his shieldless side the sword was thrust,
And I, who could not turn my eyes away,
Beheld him fall, and shrieked as there I lay,
And yet none noted me; but Bodli flung
Himself upon the earth, and o'er him hung,
Then raised his head, and laid it on his knee,
And cried:
"Alas! What have I done to thee?

Was it for this deed, then, that I was born?
Was this the end I looked for on this morn?
I said, To-day I die, to-day I die,
And folk will say, an ill deed, certainly,
He did, but living had small joy of it,
And quickly from him did his weak life flit—
Where was thy noble sword I looked to take
Here in my breast, and die for Gudrun's sake,
And for thy sake—O friend, am I forgot?
Speak yet a word!"
But Kiartan answered not,

And Bodli said: "Wilt thou not then forgive?
Think of the days I yet may have to live
Of hard life!"
Therewith *Kiartan* oped his eyes,
And strove to turn about as if to rise,
And could not, but gazed hard on Bodli's face,
And gasped out, as his eyes began to glaze:

"Farewell, thou joyous life beneath the sun,
Thou foolish wasted gift—farewell, Gudrun!"
And then on Bodli's breast back fell his head,
He strove to take his hand, and he was dead.

Then was there silence a long while, well-nigh
We heard each other breathe, till quietly
At last the slayer from the slain arose,
And took his sword, and sheathed it, and to those
Four sons of Oswif, e'en as one he spake
Who had good right the rule o'er them to take:

"Here have we laid to earth a mighty one,
And therein no great deed, forsooth, have done,
Since his great heart o'ercame him, not my sword;
And what hereafter may be our reward
For this, I know not: he that lieth here
By many a man in life was held right dear,
As well as by the man who was his friend,
And brought his life and love to bitter end;
And since I am the leader of this band

Of man-slayers, do after my command.
Go ye to Bathstead, name me everywhere
The slayer of Kiartan Olafson, send here
Folk who shall bear the body to our stead;
And then let each man of you hide his head,
For ye shall find it hard from this ill day
To keep your lives: here meanwhile will I stay,
Nor think myself yet utterly alone."

Then home turned Oswif's sons, and they being gone
We slunk away, and looking from the hill
We saw how Bodli Thorleikson stood still
In that same place, nor yet had faced the slain.
And so we gat unto our place again.

So told the herd, time long agone, the tale
Of that sad fight within the grey-sloped vale.

Swinburne

HERTHA

I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily;
I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-coloured fruit of my branches, I was, and
thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me man and woman, and wild beast and bird:
before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
Not is there to go;
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves and loves; I am stricken,
I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul
and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses
My spirit elate;
That which caresses
With hands uncreate
ly limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the
measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry
"I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high?"
I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find
but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain in the furrow,
  The plough-cloven clod
And the ploughshare drawn thorough,
  The germ and the sod,
The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower,
    dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
  Child, underground?
Fire that impassioned thee,
  Iron that bound,
Dim changes of water, what thing of all these h
    thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
  Thou hast seen with thine eyes
With what cunning of art
  Thou wast wrought in what wise,
By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen, a
    shown on my breast to the skies?

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,
  Knowledge of me?
Has the wilderness told it thee?
  Hast thou learnt of the sea?
Hast thou communed in spirit with night? Have t
    winds taken counsel with thee?

Have I set such a star
To show light on thy brow
That thou sawest from afar
What I show to thee now?
Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun and the mountains and thou?

What is here, dost thou know it?
What was, hast thou known?
Prophet nor poet
Nor tripod nor throne
Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but only thy mother alone.

Mother, not maker,
Born, and not made;
Though her children forsake her,
Allured or afraid,
Praying prayers to the God of their fashion, she stirs not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith;
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labour, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt thou give it to me.

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast,
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Always to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining the shadows and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited,
The life-tree am I;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves: ye shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive,
They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls off; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
The wounds in my bark;
Stars caught in my branches
Make day of the dark,
And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Makes utterance of me;
In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and branches
are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of
my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of
storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins, drop
through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me o
deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinit
lands and of seas.

In the spring-coloured hours
When my mind was as May's
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot ou
from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
And smell of their shoots
Were as warmth and sweet singing
And strength to my roots;
And the lives of my children made perfect with freedor
of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
I have need not of prayer;
I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air;
That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
Of faiths ye espouse;
In me only the root is
That blooms in your boughs;
Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
Abysses adored,
With dayspring and lightning
For lamp and for sword,
God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
Towards Gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful?
Was it hard to be free?
For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
  With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
  For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
  His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
  Grown grey from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
  Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
  This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
  Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
  Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
  One beam of mine eye;
One topmost blossom
  That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me,
  man that is I.

Lord de Tabley

THE COUNT OF SENLIS AT HIS TOILET

What scrap is this, you thrust upon me now?
Some grievance-bill; I 'm sick of seeing such.
What can these burghers always want with me?
I am weary of petitions, yet they pour.
This is a brave word, liberty, indeed;
And now-a-days each lean and mongrel whelp
Littered about these streets chimes in his voice
For liberty. I loathe the letters' sound.
How dare you bring this in at tiring time,
Fretting my soul? This chain is dull as brass,
Lean down, you caitiff, lacquer up the gold;
Rub for your life, rub. There 's another stone
Flawed in the centre droplet, where it shows,
Cracked like a nut; why, man, it was a gem,
An amethyst as clear as a girl's eye.
And you must crash my chain about like sacks
Of Kathern pears; there are no servants, none,
As I remember service, in these days;

A new time pestilent; each clown must ride,
And nobles trudge behind him in the dirt—
Lay out my murrey-coloured velvet suit;
How you detain me fumbling; knave and fool,
Don't ruffle back the pile of Genoa's looms
With your rank sweating fingers the wrong way.
Do you suppose I wear a wild cat's fur
For your amusement? You must play these tricks,
With only half-an-hour to banquet time;
And when I rail, stand helpless, gibbering there,
As if a nobleman could tire himself.
Like a field-scarecrow against time and grain,
You 'd have me round my shoulders toss a sack,
And give my hair one shake, and make an end,
And so stride in among the grey-green eyes,
And dainty hands, and little perfumed arms,
And white smooth laughing kittens at their play;
Dear hearts, I think they call it love-making,
A purr begins it and a scratching ends,
Or each succeeds alternate; bless them all:
You, with these darlings waiting, prove a snail,
Your careless hands would send me to the feast
Much as a diver from the castle moat,
Slimed in disorder. You 've the mind, it seems,
And leisure to disgrace me. Try, my knave.
You that are born upon my liberties,
And I 've the right of gibbet on my lands,
At least my fathers had it; that 's the same;
If time is able to filch lawful rights

Away from any man without his leave,
Then let time void the ducats from my pouch,
When I refuse to spend them. Have then heed;
And now this gentle rabble, that I own,
Have bribed you here, my thrall, to bring me in
A string of rank seditions on a rag
Of calfskin, at the very time and hour,
You know, it chiefly sets me out of gear
To find thus rudely thrust beneath my nose
The wrongs of carrion butchers, the sweet sighs
Of carters, longing after equal laws.
To push these in, of all hours in the day,
To vex me here half-dressed, is shameless deed.
Consider only, certain moments hence
The banquet summons finds me, pest of heaven!
With my mind ruffled, half my clothes awry;
I 'm sent among the damsels at the board,
With a sour taste of serfdom in my mouth;
I am put from my whole amenity;
My pleasing power and courteous manner lost;
For such light sunny ways will not beam out,
Unless I can forget, ignore, abolish,
The sweating boors penned in their styes below.

Man, man, is this a time for wrong and right?
The doublet bulges, the ruff hangs awry,
Limp as the wool of some damp wether's fleece.
The feast is ready,—they are going down,—
I hear Count Edmund, coxcomb, on the stairs—

You loiter, varlet, and I 'm late; your deed;
You thrust your charters when I ought to dress;
Charters indeed. I, that have known it long,
Have never seen this precious burgh of mine
Save on the eve of starving thro' my dues,
At least their song has run so all these years.
And yet they are fed enough to roar out loud,
" Behold, we starve!"—My ruffles; that 's the left,
You idiot—And they breed too, breed like rats;
So much the better for my toll per head.
They will not starve; I 'd like to see it done.
They can cheat hunger in a hundred ways;
They rob my saw-pits clean of bran for bread;
There never were such greedy knaves as these.
They clear my outer court of nettles next;
They boil them, so I 'm told, I hope they sting.
Well, I shall not complain, it saves the scythe,
And we great lords must wink and let ourselves
Be pilfered by the small fry halter-ripe.
It is the doom and meed of noble blood,
To be a prey to clowns; and God, He knows,
I am not one of those who grudge the poor.
And so my kindness fills them full of corn,
And rains this plague down in petitions thus.
I am soft-hearted, they presume on this—
And I will singe clean out your fishy eyes
With white-hot tongs, unless you make that cloak
Fall smoother on the carriage of my sword.
Why, you lean hound, whom mange will soon destroy,

And save your hanging, where 's the scabbard brace?
See, you have made it stick right out behind,
Like Satan's sister's broomstick. And the cooks
Are at it dishing up. You fumble there,
As if the precious minutes stood like sheep,
And you 'd the day to lie upon the grass
And count the crows. There, that goes better—Come,
I 'll glance on this petition—What is here?
" That our starvation is no idle tale,
Of his own seeing our liege lord must know;
Since his own noble and peculiar pack,
In tufted sedges at the mort o' th' deer,
Lately unearthed a lean white woman dead—"
Confound the knaves; and granting this were so,
This is a delicate and savoury thing
Just before dinner to remind me of.
This shall spoil all I meant to do for them;
How dare they? Why this same wan rigid face
Must thrust itself upon my grounds and die,
And sicken several pretty damsels found,
And spoil the hunting of a score of lords;
And damp the show. No wonder; I myself
Felt rather squeamish half a dial's turn,
And found strong waters needful to reset
The impassive mettle of high breeding's ways.
And then my Kate, who 'll laugh a lawyer dumb,
Was all that evening dull as a town clock;
And later on . . . here catch this trash—a word
More and I clap a double impost on,

And make them starve in earnest. Tell them so,
Sir thief, my varlet, their ambassador—
Enough of this, why drivel we on these?
Get, for Saint Job's sake, forward with my beard.
You push this trivial business in my jowl,
And make me dawdle over urgent cares,
And tice me to peruse, while your rough hands
Will turn me out a Scythian for the feast,
In barbarous disorder. Is that all?
My ring and gloves;—Count Edmund, there he goes;
How that fool brags about his pedigree.
His veins must run pure ichor, ours mere blood.
I 'd gladly try my rapier on his ribs,
And bleed him much as any plough-boy bleeds.
How can a man speak any such vain words?—
I hear him swinging down the corridor,
With all his plumage and bedizened hide
As clean as a cobswan's—trust him for that—
He has no thought above his skin and gloves,
Or at what angle his trim beard should grow:
Despatch, thou slave: complete me, or indeed
He 'll be before me with the duchess yet.

D. G. Rossetti

THE WHITE SHIP

Henry I of England—25th Nov., 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
  (*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'T was a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
  (*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

'T was so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back to-day.

King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast
" Clerkly Harry " was all his boast.

Of ruthless strokes full many an one
He had struck to crown himself and his son;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.

And when to the chase his court would crowd,
The poor flung ploughshares on his road,
And shrieked: " Our cry is from King to God!"

But all the chiefs of the English land
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance:

And every baron in Normandy
Had taken the oath of fealty.

'T was sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home:

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Stout Fitz-Stephen came to the King,—
A pilot famous in seafaring;

And he held to the King, in all men's sight,
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

" Liege Lord! my father guided the ship
From whose boat your father's foot did slip
When he caught the English soil in his grip,

" And cried: ' By this clasp I claim command
O'er every rood of English land!'

" He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now
In that ship with the archer carved at her prow:

" And thither I 'll bear, an it be my due,
Your father's son and his grandson too.

" The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;
From Harfleur's harbour she sails to-day,

" With masts fair-pennoned as Norman spears
And with fifty well-tried mariners."

Quoth the King: " My ships are chosen each one,
But I 'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

" My son and daughter and fellowship
Shall cross the water in the White Ship."

The King set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were:

And I Berold was the meanest hind
In all that train to the Prince assign'd.

The Prince was a lawless shameless youth;
From his father's loins he sprang without ruth:

Eighteen years till then he had seen,
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried: " Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row:

" Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbour at midnight."

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,
And the White Ship furrowed the water-way.

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune
To the double flight of the ship and the moon:

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead:

As white as a lily glimmered she
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, "Friends, 't is the hour to sing!
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing?"

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song,—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep!—the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'T is said that afar—a shrill strange sigh—
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great King's heir for the waves to whelm,
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm!

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierc'd:

And like the moil round a sinking cup,
The waters against her crowded up.

A moment the pilot's senses spin,—
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
" Row! the sea 's smooth, and the night is clear!"

" What! none to be saved but these and I?"
" Row, row as you 'd live! All here must die."

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'T was then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, " Put back! she must not die!"

And back with the current's force they reel
Like a leaf that 's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide:
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,
And " Saved!" was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell:
It turned as a bucket turns in the well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell:

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bended knee
And maugre the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,
He 'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'T was a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

And now the end came o'er the waters' womb
Like the last great Day that 's yet to come.

With prayers in vain and curses in vain,
The White Ship sundered on the mid-main:

And what were men and what was a ship
Were toys and splinters in the sea's grip.

I Berold was down in the sea;
And passing strange though the thing may be,
Of dreams then known I remember me.

Blithe is the shout on Harfleur's strand
When morning lights the sails to land:

And blithe is Honfleur's echoing gloam
When mothers call the children home;

And high do the bells of Rouen beat
When the Body of Christ goes down the street.

These things and the like were heard and shown
In a moment's trance 'neath the sea alone;

And when I rose, 't was the sea did seem,
And not these things, to be all a dream.

The ship was gone and the crowd was gone,
And the deep shuddered and the moon shone

And in a strait grasp my arms did span
The mainyard rent from the mast where it
And on it with me was another man.

Where lands were none 'neath the dim sea-sky,
We told our names, that man and I.

" O I am Godefroy de l'Aigle hight,
And son am I to a belted knight."

" And I am Berold the butcher's son
Who slays the beasts in Rouen town."

Then cried we upon God's name, as we
Did drift on the bitter winter sea.

But lo! a third man rose o'er the wave,
And we said, " Thank God! us three may He save!"

He clutched to the yard with panting stare,
And we looked and knew Fitz-Stephen there.

He clung, and " What of the Prince?" quoth he.
" Lost, lost!" we cried. He cried, " Woe on me!"
And loosed his hold and sank through the sea.

And soul with soul again in that space
We two were together face to face:

And each knew each, as the moments sped,
Less for one living than for one dead:

And every still star overhead
Seemed an eye that knew we were but dead.

And the hours passed; till the noble's son
Sighed, " God be my help! my strength's foredone!

" O farewell, friend, for I can no more!"
" Christ take thee!" I moaned; and his life was o'er.

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea
Like an angel's wing that beat tow'rds me.

Sore numb I was in my sheepskin coat;
Half dead I hung, and might nothing note,
Till I woke sun-warmed in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him

That day I told my tale to a priest,
Who charged me, till the shrift were releas'd,
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

And with the priest I thence did fare
To King Henry's court at Winchester.

We spoke to the King's high chamberlain,
And he wept and mourned again and again,
As if his own son had been slain:

And round us ever there crowded fast
Great men with faces all aghast:

And who so bold that might tell the thing
Which now they knew to their lord the King?
Much woe I learnt in their communing.

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred
For two whole days, and this was the third:

And still to all his court would he say,
" What keeps my son so long away?"

And they said: " The ports lie far and wide
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

" And England's cliffs are not more white
Than her women are, and scarce so light
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright;

" And in some port that he reached from France
The Prince has lingered for his pleasaunce."

But once the King asked: " What distant cry
Was that we heard 'twixt the earth and sky?"

And one said: " With suchlike shouts, pardie!
Do the fishers fling their nets at sea."

And one: " Who knows not the shrieking quest
When the sea-mew misses its young from the nest?"

'T was thus till now they had soothed his dread,
Albeit they knew not what they said:

But who should speak to-day of the thing
That all knew there except the King?

Then pondering much they found a way,
And met round the King's high seat that day:

And the King sat with a heart sore stirred,
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

'T was then through the hall the King was 'ware
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss:

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in Spring,
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,
For now the lords were silent all.

And the King wondered, and said, "Alack!
Who sends me a fair boy dressed in black?

"*Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall*
As though my court were a funeral?"

Then lowly knelt the child at the dais,
And looked up weeping in the King's face.

"O wherefore black, O King, ye may say,
For white is the hue of death to-day.

"Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship."

King Henry fell as a man struck dead;
And speechless still he stared from his bed
When to him next day my rede I read.

There 's many an hour must needs beguile
A King's high heart that he must smile,—

Full many a lordly hour, full fain
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign:—

But this King never smiled again.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.)
'T was a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(The sea hath no King but God alone.)

Francis Thompson

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter,
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
" All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;

(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to:
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silver chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—

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Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above them beat—
" Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
" Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me " (said I) " your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done:

I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
    I knew all the swift importings
    On the wilful face of skies;
    I knew how the clouds arise
    Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
        All that 's born or dies
    Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
    With them joyed and was bereaven.
    I was heavy with the even,
    When she lit her glimmering tapers
    Round the day's dead sanctities.
    I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
    Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
    I laid my own to beat,
    And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
    These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
    Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
    The breasts o' her tenderness:

Never did any milk of her once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
    Ah! must—
    Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with
        it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
    From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
    Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
    But not ere him who summoneth
    I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
    Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
    Be dunged with rotten death?

        Now of that long pursuit
        Comes on at hand the bruit;
    That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:

"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou mightst seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"
Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, *fondest*, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me!"

NOTES

TENNYSON — IN MEMORIAM

Line 1. **him that rests below.** Arthur Hallam.

20 **the latest moon.** The most recently discovered star. Perhaps reference is designed to the discovery of the planet Uranus in 1846, after mathematical calculations made by Adams at Cambridge and Le Verrier in France

40. **the Shadow.** Death

53 **keeps the keys.** I e the ideas of God and the hopes of immortality cherished by the various religions will be proved or disproved by human experience at death.

60. **Pan.** The Greek god of nature. His name means "everything".

70. **On Argive heights.** This refers metaphorically to the loftiness of Greek philosophy

72. **flute of Arcady.** Arcadia is a beautiful mountainous [illegible]

76. **Is dash'd.** A reference to spots on the sun

113. **So might I find.** I e Would that I might find! The poet desires death for himself before he forgets or fails his dead friend

TENNYSON — TITHONUS

18 **thy strong Hours.** The Hours were attendants of the dawn-goddess Eos, surrounding her chariot.

25 **the silver star.** The morning star

33. **that dark world.** The earth. "Dark" in the sense of "obscure from distance".

39. **the wild team.** The horses attached to the chariot of the dawn.

62. **that strange song.** According to mythology, the walls of Troy rose from the earth at the word and song of Poseidon, god of the sea, and of Apollo, god of the sun. Ilion is the Greek name for Troy.

71. **grassy barrows.** (Old English *beorh*, "a little hill".) The name for sepulchral mounds found in most parts of the world. The largest to be found in England is Silbury Hill, which is 130 feet high.

MATTHEW ARNOLD — THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

2. **wattled cotes.** Enclosures made of hurdles.

13. **cruse.** A small pot or jar.

28. **bent grass.** A coarse kind of grass.

45. **arts to rule.** Apparently some form of hypnotism.

59. **ingle-bench.** The corner bench by the wide open fire-place.

95. **lasher.** A weir or dam to restrain water in a river.

130. **grange.** A barn.

208. **as Dido.** Virgil tells, in the second book of the *Æneid*, how Æneas came to Carthage in his wanderings, was welcomed by Dido the queen, who fell in love with him. He left her, however, in consequence of warnings from the gods watching over his destiny as the ancestor to be of the Romans, and when, as related in the sixth book, Æneas passed living through Hades, the shade of Dido passed him with averted face.

232. **Tyrian trader.** The Phœnicians were among th earliest historically known traders along the Mediterranc coasts. Later the Greeks took to sea-trading, and Arnol simile vividly and beautifully imagines the first cont between the old and the new.

245. **Syrtes.** Two quicksands off the north coast of Af

247. **Western Straits.** Those of Gibraltar.

249. **Iberians.** Ancient inhabitants of Spain and Po

ROBERT BROWNING — FRA LIPPO LIPPI

7. **The Carmine's my cloister.** This is the convent of the Carmelites in Florence.

17. **Cosimo de' Medici.** Lived 1389–1464, son of the great banker Giovanni de' Medici. Banished from Florence in 1432 but recalled the following year and remained till his death the uncrowned king of the city, ruling it with wisdom and moderation and giving patronage to artists and men of the "new learning" of the Renascence. One of his sons was Lorenzo "the Magnificent", who developed Cosimo's work in the state and in learning with still greater splendour

33 **for the slave that holds John Baptist's head a-dangle.** Vasari relates that Lippo Lippi, commissioned by the wardens of the Capitular Church of Prato, painted for them the Chapel of the High Altar, on the right wall of it pictures showing the Disputation, the Stoning and the Death of St Stephen, to whom the church was dedicated, and, on the opposite wall, the History of St John the Baptist, one scene representing the Decapitation of the Saint

37, 38 **a bit of chalk, A wood-coal or the like?** While still a young monk, Lippo Lippi was once captured by a Moorish galley and taken captive to Barbary but regained his freedom, after eighteen months of harsh slavery, by drawing a full-length portrait of his master, robed in his Moorish vestments, on a wall with a piece of charcoal taken from a fire

42. **I saw the proper twinkle in your eye.** "*Fra Filippo* was very partial to men of cheerful character" (Vasari)

47 **three weeks shut within my mew.** Vasari gives this escapade in the following words "It was known that, while occupied in the pursuit of his pleasures, the works undertaken by him *received little or none of his attention*, for which reason Cosimo de' Medici, wishing him to execute a work in his own palace, shut him up, that he might not waste his time in running about, but having endured this confinement for two days, he then made ropes with the sheets of his bed, which he cut to pieces for that purpose, and so having let himself down from a *window, escaped, and for* several days gave him[illegible] Cosimo had him sought out a[illegible] to go in and out, being [illegible] and effectually served [illegible]

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having let himself down from a window, escaped, and for several days gave

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that the excellencies of rare genius were as forms of light and not beasts of burden".

73. **Jerome.** Lived A.D. 346–420. Translator of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate edition) and the foremost scholar among the Fathers of the Western Church. In his youth he lived for a while as an ascetic hermit in the desert near Antioch, and the subject of his being visited and left unmolested by a hungry lion is a favourite among early Italian painters. Vasari mentions "a figure of St. Jerome doing penance", painted by Lippo Lippi, "which is now in the guardaroba of Duke Cosimo", but the picture is now lost.

81. **I was a baby.** "By the death of his father [Tommaso di Luppo, a butcher] he was left a friendless orphan at the age of two years, his mother having also died shortly after his birth. The child was for some time under the care of a certain Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, the sister of his father, who brought him up with very great difficulty till he had attained his eighth year, when, being no longer able to support the burden of his maintenance, she placed him in the above-named convent of the Carmelites." (Vasari.)

107. **Not overmuch their way.** "Here (in the convent), in proportion as he showed himself dexterous and ingenious in all works performed by hand, did he manifest the utmost dullness and incapacity in letters, to which he would never apply himself, nor would he take any pleasure in learning of any kind." (Vasari.)

121. **the Eight.** The magistrates who governed Florence.

129. **I drew men's faces.** "In place of studying, he never did anything but daub his own books, and those of the other boys with caricatures, whereupon the prior determined to give him all means and every opportunity fo learning to draw." (Vasari.)

130. **antiphonary.** The Roman Catholic service-bool compiled by Gregory the Great. It contains the antiphor responses, &c., sung by the choir.

139. **Camaldolese.** An austere order of monks founc in 1012 by St. Romuald at Camaldoli, among the Etrus Apennines, about thirty miles east of Florence.

140. **Preaching Friars.** The Dominicans, named their founder, St. Dominic, were called "Friars Preacl by Pope Innocent III in 1215.

189. **Giotto.** Lived 1276–1337. Pupil of Cimabue and the greatest Italian painter of the "primitive" school.

196. **Herodias.** Wife of Philip, brother of Herod the Great, who obliged him to divorce her so that she might become his own wife. John the Baptist was imprisoned for condemning the transaction and executed by a trick of Herodias. It was Salome, daughter of Herodias by Philip, who "danced and got men's heads cut off".

235. **Brother Angelico's the man.** Giovanni Angelico (1387–1455), Dominican and painter of Florence, a "primitive" like Giotto.

236. **Brother Lorenzo.** Don Lorenzo Monaco, i.e. the monk, a great painter belonging to the Order of the Camaldolese.

276. **Guidi.** Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone Guidi, called Masaccio, which is a derivative of Maso from Tommaso and means "clumsy Tom". Masaccio excelled in the foreshortening and smoothing of his figures and was notable for the grandeur of his style. His dates are 1401–28.

323. **a Saint Laurence . . . At Prato.** "In Prato, near Florence, where Fra Filippo had some relations, he took up his abode for some months, and there executed several works for the whole surrounding district." (Vasari.) St Laurence was martyred by being burned on a gridiron. In the midst of it he cried to his torturers to turn him over as "he was done on one side".

346. **Something in Sant' Ambrogio's!** An actual picture painted for the nuns of Sant' Ambrogio in Florence. In the right-hand lower corner is seen Fra Lippo himself beside an angel, bearing a scroll inscribed, *Is perfecit opus*. Browning's slight alteration in the inscription alters the meaning from "He completed the work" to "That low fellow completed the work".

The songs in the poem are of the variety known as "stornelli", each consisting of three lines of which the first contains the name of a flower. The love theme is then told in two lines of eleven syllables each, agreeing by rhyme, assonance, or repetition with the first. The peasants of Tuscany sing them over their work, vying with each other in their improvisation.

Several passages in Vasari's life of Fra Lippo dwell upon the vividness of his depiction of human passions on the faces of his figures.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI — THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS

100. **mavis and merle.** The song-thrush and blackbird.

101. **hodden grey.** Natural coloured wool made by mixing one black fleece with ten white ones.

110. **réveillée.** Morning song or chant.

185. **brooked.** Endured.

291. **aftermath.** A second mowing.

WILLIAM MORRIS — THE SLAYING OF KIARTAN OLAFSON

The Laxdale Saga, from which this selection is taken, tells of two Icelandic families, those of Olaf and of Oswif, which lived in peace and friendship within seven miles of each other at the halls of Herdholt and Bathstead respectively. Of Olaf's sons Kiartan was the chiefest for strength and beauty, and he had good words for everyone; his close friend and foster-brother was his cousin Bodli, dark-haired and featured while Kiartan was fair, but loving Kiartan with an equal heart. Oswif's sons were an evil-hearted crew, but his daughter Gudrun was the beauty of the whole countryside, white and golden-tressed, like the Northern goddess Freya.

Kiartan was moved by Gudrun's beauty at first sight, and Gudrun gave him her heart and often they met, Bodli often accompanying Kiartan on his visits to her but acting the discreet friend with good heart. It happened that Kiartan visited Norway, along with Bodli, in his ship and was held hostage because the Norwegian king would have Iceland become Christian and his messengers to that end had been ill-used by the Icelanders. Ingebiorg, the Norwegian king's daughter, fell in love with Kiartan, who, remembering Gudrun yet could not be hard to anyone, and tales got about that h and Ingebiorg would wed. In time Bodli was allowed to g back to Iceland and bore faithfully Kiartan's message Gudrun that he would shortly return, but she also wrung fr Bodli the story about Ingebiorg. Thus, when Kiartan retur a year later, carrying a splendid Greek coif from Ingebio left desolate by Kiartan's kind but unloving departure, his lady, he found Gudrun already married to Bodli, who conceived a hopeless love for her on the former visits Kiartan. The marriage of Bodli and Gudrun was lovele her part and unsatisfied on his, but it ended Kiartan's h

and, little by little and urged on by his sister, he married a gentle girl Refna and gave her the coif.

On one of the yearly Christmas feasts, when Bathstead and Herdholt alternately visited each other, the sword which the Norwegian king had given Kiartan at parting was stolen by the sons of Oswif and found by An the Black, retainer and friend of Kiartan, sunk in mire on the road between the two houses and brought back (hence the name of scorn 'Mire-Blade" which Oswif's sons cast at Kiartan), and at the next feast the same men stole Refna's coif. By the chatter aroused by this second theft Kiartan was stirred to exact reparation and surrounded Bathstead with armed men and carried off all the herds of Oswif

Peace was now changed for hidden war between the houses, and, hearing that Kiartan would pass near them with but a small following, Ospak and the rest of Oswif's sons determined to waylay and slay him and stung Bodli into leading them. At this point the selection begins

LORD DE TABLEY — THE COUNT OF SENLIS AT HIS TOILET

21. **murrey-coloured.** Dark red, mulberry-coloured

53 **rag of calfskin.** Vellum is made of calfskin

107 **Satan's sister's broomstick.** A reference to the supposed practice of witches, who rode on broomsticks to their yearly meeting on the Devil's sabbath.

145 **Ichor.** The fluid which ran in the veins of the Greek gods and goddesses

D. G. ROSSETTI — THE WHITE SHIP

14 **"Clerkly Harry."** Henry I, contrary to general mediæval practice for princes and lords, received a good education, being able to read and write Latin and knowing something of the English laws and language Hence he was called Henry Beauclerk and is credited with the saying that an unlettered king is only a crowned ass.

FRANCIS THOMPSON — THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

1. **Him.** Stands, in the poem, for Christ as the personification of Divine Love.

9. **Feet.** It must be remembered that the feet of Christ, having been wounded on the cross, bear marks which are emblems, in Christian and especially Catholic religious imagery, of the Divine love that suffers for man.

14. **instant.** A Latinism, meaning " urgently ", even " menacingly ".

24. **wist,** though an improper linguistic formation, is used for " knew ", being borrowed by the poet from poetic practice reaching back to Spenser.

27. **clangèd.** Actually a verb of sound, referring to the sounds which bolts make when they are shut violently. Here used for the closing itself.

41. **savannahs.** Originally treeless plains of South America. Here metaphorical for " wide spaces ".

66. **Lady-Mother.** Nature.

111. **harness.** Armour.

130. **amaranthine.** Lit. " immortal ", applied to sever plants which last long and which the Greeks fabled to be foun in the Elysian Fields.

149. **cypress-c** ...ed. Branches of the cypress w carried at funera ... hence the associat with sorrow.

158. **shard.** J